

1 SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 60

2 **49TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2009**

3 INTRODUCED BY

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10 A JOINT MEMORIAL

11 REQUESTING THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO CONVENE A WORKING  
12 GROUP TO DISCUSS RE-CREATING THE POSITION OF STATE SUPERVISOR  
13 OF SPANISH TO PROTECT NEW MEXICO'S UNIQUE CONSTITUTIONAL  
14 PROVISIONS FOR PRESERVATION OF THE SPANISH LANGUAGE.

15  
16 WHEREAS, the constitution of New Mexico protects the  
17 Spanish language as part of its recognition that the state was  
18 a Spanish-speaking region prior to statehood; and

19 WHEREAS, in the period from 1846 to 1848, some sixty  
20 thousand Spanish speakers lived in New Mexico as Mexico ceded  
21 lands to the United States following the Spanish-American war;  
22 and

23 WHEREAS, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed in  
24 February 1848, granted United States citizenship to all Mexican  
25 nationals who remained in the ceded territory, although only

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1 approximately two thousand Mexican nationals remained; and

2 WHEREAS, New Mexico was approximately fifty percent  
3 Spanish-speaking during the territorial era, beginning in 1850;  
4 and

5 WHEREAS, one of the major reasons that Arizona and New  
6 Mexico did not join the union as a unified state, though they  
7 were both part of the New Mexico territory, was because of  
8 conflicts over proper recognition of the importance of  
9 preserving and teaching the Spanish language; and

10 WHEREAS, Spanish speakers at the time of statehood would  
11 not sacrifice their right to serve on juries in exchange for  
12 statehood; and

13 WHEREAS, New Mexico joined the union with two official  
14 languages: Spanish and English; and

15 WHEREAS, in 1925, New Mexico law required every high  
16 school with fifty or more pupils to employ a teacher qualified  
17 to teach both Spanish and English, but the state repealed that  
18 law in 1962; and

19 WHEREAS, in 1943, the position of "state supervisor of  
20 Spanish" was created "to bring about an improvement in the  
21 teaching of Spanish in the schools ... in order to insure the  
22 retainment and the development of the Spanish language, with a  
23 view of future inter-American relations", but the state  
24 repealed the law creating that position in 1967; and

25 WHEREAS, the importance of New Mexico's bilingual

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1 tradition only increases with increased trade and exchanges  
2 with Mexico and South America; and

3 WHEREAS, the importance of being bilingual only increases  
4 for both native Spanish and native English speakers as more  
5 opportunities for international contact occur;

6 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
7 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the secretary of public education be  
8 requested to name and convene a working group, to include  
9 teachers, scholars and activists knowledgeable about uses for  
10 Spanish-speaking skills, for the purpose of setting goals for  
11 educational attainment in the area of Spanish-language  
12 teaching; and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the ultimate aim of the  
14 working group be to consider the merits of re-creating the  
15 state supervisor of Spanish position within the public  
16 education department; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group report its  
18 findings and recommendations to the legislative education study  
19 committee by November 2009; and

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be  
21 transmitted to the secretary of public education.

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